

Protect Connecticut's Public Lands by Supporting SJ35

Constitutional Amendment ensures public input for public land conveyances

The Problem

Every year, the CT General Assembly considers a “Conveyance Bill” to sell, swap, or give away state-owned public lands. Valuable public lands like State Parks, Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, and Agricultural lands are included in this process, and changes are often made to the Conveyance Bill at the very end of the Legislative session when no debate or public input is possible. How would you feel if your favorite public lands were lost, and you had no opportunity to provide input?

Constitutional Reform is Necessary

The language in the Conveyance Bill waives all other laws that may interfere with selling, trading, or giving away public lands (“Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes ...”). However, the General Assembly cannot waive or ignore protections in the state constitution. Maine, Massachusetts, and New York all have constitutional protections for public lands; Connecticut should too.

SJ 35

The state constitution can only be amended if the public votes in favor of a referendum on the ballot in an election year like 2018. To get on the ballot, the General Assembly must pass a joint resolution in both chambers.

SJ 35 (“Resolution proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Protect Real Property Held or Controlled by the State”) would put a question on the statewide ballot this year that would:

- 1) **Require a public hearing** before any public lands are sold, traded, or given away; and
- 2) **Require a 2/3rds vote** before lands held by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (State Parks, Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, etc.) or the Department of Agriculture could be sold, swapped, or given away.

For more information

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